The Government have decided to set up a permanent Bench of the Guwahati High Court at Shillong, consisting of 2 Judges.

(b) As pe)r information available, the number of main cases pending in the Guwahati High Court pertaining to jMteghalay ais given below:

icyattluend of	Number of main cases
1983....	294
1984....	297
19S5.. '.	. Not available
1986....	283

604. *[Transferred to the 20th November, 1987]*

605. [Transferred to t; he th November, 1987]

Abolition of Freight Equalisation Scheme

606. SHRI MOSTAFA BIN QUA SEM: Will the Minister of PLANNING *W* be pleased to state;

(a) what is the progress made for abolition of freight equalisation scheme on coal etc. for which the Government is committed; and

(b) what are the reasons for the delay in abolition of the scheme?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRl SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) There is no freight equalisation scheme operating in respect of coal. The Government has decided in principle to phase out gradually the existing freight equalisation in respect of cement & steel, subject to subsidisation of transport for remote, inaccessible and isolated areas. In the. case of cement, phasing out of freight equalisation has already commenced with the introduction of partial decontrol with effect from 28^-2-1982. Freight equalisation operates only in respect of the levy portion of the sale of cement which is progressively being reduced. As regards steel, in view of the representations received from various quarters it has been decided to refer the matter to the National Development Council.

Freight Equalisation Scheme

607. DR. R. K. PODDAR; Will the Minister of PLANNING be pleased to state:

(a whether it is a fact that the Government is. reluctant to phase out freight equalisation scheme in respect of iron and steel in view of vast price differential to save States like Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, which do not have steel Plants; and

(b) if so. whether on the same reasons the scheme for cotton, groundnut oils, industrial alcohol, mustard oil, wheat, textiles will be introduced to save the interests of States like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Orissa, Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION (SHRl SUKH RAM); (a) It is incorrect to say that Government is reluctant to phase out freight equalisation scheme. The matter has been referred to National Development Council.

(b) No, Sir. As recommended by the National Transport Policy Committee it has been decided that no hew scheme of ffleight equalisation for industrial commodities or for essential items of mass consumption

would be introduced except to subsidise transport cost of industrial commodities in the case of remote, inaccessible and isolate^ areas like North Eastern Region and hill and difficult areas.

U. K. Indians Angry at Mission's Stand

60S. SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item that appeared in 'Hindustan Times' dated 14th September, 1987 under the caption 'U. K. Indians angry at mission's stand' according to which Deputy High Commissioner is alleged to have patronised people with anti-Indian leanings;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether an$_{y}$ enquiry has been conducted in the matter; and

(d) if so, the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER CF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRl EDUARDO FALEIRO); (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (d) The newspaper item seeks to criticise the presence of the Indian Deputy High Commissioner at some functions organised by overseas Indians. Government have obtained the views of the Indian High Commissioner in London. There are several Organisations and Groups of Indians in U. K. The Indian High Commission maintains contacts with all such Organisations and Groups, which are not anti-national. The officials of the Indian High Commission have, in the past, participated in various function organised by the Indian Overseas Congress in seveTal cities of U. K. They have. however, not attended any function organise^ by anti-Indian activists in U. K.

There are serious inaccuracies and imputations in the newspaper item, which are being brought to the notice of the Editor**.**

Expansion of Defence Assistance from US

609. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government have taken steps to expand the sphere of defence assistance from **USA conse**. quent on Prime Minister's visit to that country; and

(b) if so, what are the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI K. C. PANT): (a) and (b) During the visit of the Prime Minister o USA, it was agreed to expand deence cooperation along the lines which have already been established in working together with the United States of America on certain defence related technologies like the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) project. The two sides also agreed to explore and identify other areas of defence co-operation.

U. S. Aid to Pakistan

610. SHRIMATI KRISHNA KAUL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has urged United States not to resume and till Pakistan gave clarification on its nuclear pro gramme; and

(b) if so, the reaction of Govern ment of U. S. thereon?